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Techniques for Stress Management

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Abstract: Stress is a big menace to human life, which may come with the workload and other personal problems in the life of a person. A person with hypertension did not realize that he is under stress, but this thing produces many big problems and diseases inside the body like – Heart problems, brain problems, insomnia, etc. So this is very important to counter this so that we can enjoy our costless lives happily.

Stress management is defined as the tools, strategies, or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress has on your mental or physical well-being. A variety of techniques can be used to manage stress. These include mental, emotional, and behavioral strategies. When stress management is used regularly and in response to stressful life events, we can optimize our well-being.

I. INTRODUCTION

Science defines “Stress as a state of mental or bodily tension caused by physical, emotional or mental factors”. Stress can be caused either by external or internal conditions/stressors. External causes of stress could be due to environmental, psychological, or social situations. Internal causes could be a result of medical conditions or any illness.

Ways To Manage Stress

Given how bad stress is for the body, managing stress is essential. Managing stress is simple, although not always easy. There are lots of ways to do it. In the article below, we'll talk about some of these ways.

Stress Management Activities

Some of the most important activities for stress management include optimizing sleep, eating, and exercise.

Sleep

Insufficient sleep contributes to greater HPA axis activation. That's why stress management should include improving duration and quality of sleep. To start, be sure to block out blue light (from TVs, phones, and computers) at least 30 minutes before bed. You might also try getting blue-light blocking glasses or getting a sleep-inducing red light bulb (which improves sleep) for your bedside lamp.

Diet

DiETING or restricting calories actually increases HPA activation. So if you're aiming to manage stress be sure to eat enough nutritious food to fuel all your body's systems.

Exercise

Because exercise increases the demand for energy and cortisol, avoid high-intensity exercise when trying to get your stress under control. Instead, do low-intensity exercise like walking, swimming, or yoga.

Stress Management Skills

In addition to making sure we do stress management activities, we can also build up our stress management skills. Here are some skills that can help you beat stress.

Meditation

Multiple studies have shown that meditation can decrease cortisol in the context of stressful situations. This suggests that building our meditation skills may be helpful for managing stress. Consider checking out Emily Fletcher's Meditation Masterclass.

Find opportunities to be kind to others

Expressing positivity towards others, for example with compassion, gratitude, and loving-kindness, can buffer us against stress. So finding ways to be kind may indeed be a good stress reducer.

Stress Management Techniques

Changing our minds is just one avenue for stress management. We can also practice stress management techniques that capitalize on the body-mind connection. Here some science-based stress management techniques to try:

Progressive muscle relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing a group of muscles as you breathe in and quickly releasing tension as you breathe out. Proceed through one set of muscles at a time. For example, start with the hands, then forearms, then biceps, then shoulders, and so on. Research has shown that progressive muscle relaxation can lower cortisol, so it may be a helpful technique to try.

Breathing exercises

One effective way to activate the parasympathetic nervous system (the rest and digest system) is with deep breathing. For example, cycling slow breathing (2-4 breaths per minute) then fast (30 breaths per minute), then ending with three long "Om"s, can reduce anxiety. Breathing techniques like this and others can help turn off your stress response.

II. 7 TIPS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Before discussing stress management techniques, there are several factors to consider.

1. Understand your stress

How do you stress? It can be different for everybody. By understanding what stress looks like for you, you can be better prepared, and reach for your stress management toolbox when needed.

2. Identify your stress sources

What causes you to be stressed? Be it work, family, change or any of the other potential thousand triggers.

3. Learn to recognize stress signals

We all process stress differently so it's important to be aware of your individual stress symptoms. What are your internal alarm bells? Low tolerance, headaches, stomach pains or a combination from the above 'Symptoms of stress'.

4. Recognize your stress strategies

What is your go-to tactic for calming down? These can be behaviors learned over years and sometimes aren't the healthy option. For example, some people cope with stress by self-medicating with alcohol or overeating.

5. Implement healthy stress management strategies

It's good to be mindful of any current unhealthy coping behaviors so you can switch them out for a healthy option. For example, if overeating is your current go to, you could practice meditation instead, or make a decision to phone a friend to chat through your situation. The American Psychological Association suggest that switching out one behavior at a time is most effective in creating positive change.

6. Make self-care a priority

When we make time for ourselves, we put our well-being before others. This can feel selfish to start, but it is like the airplane analogy—we must put our own oxygen mask on before we can assist others. The simplest things that promote well-being, such as enough sleep, food, downtime, and exercise are often the ones overlooked.

Self-care is group-care.

7. Ask for support when needed

If you're feeling overwhelmed, reach out to a friend or family member you can talk to. Speaking with a healthcare professional can also reduce stress, and help us learn healthier coping strategies.

These tips are thing we can all benefit from doing more of. The techniques are categorized into three groups:

1. Action Orientated Approaches: used to take action to change a stressful situation
2. Emotion-oriented approaches: used to change the way we perceive a stressful situation
3. Acceptance-oriented approaches: used for dealing with stressful situations you can't control

Explore the below options and find what combination works best for keeping your stress levels under control.

III. 12 STRESS RELIEF ACTIVITIES & EXERCISES**1. Self-massage**

Another stress management tool that you can do anywhere, anytime – is a self-massage. The below clip shows you how.

2. Relaxing music

Or if you're looking for some background sound, put on this relaxation music and experience the calming effects

3. Schedule time to de-stress

Set aside time each day (as much as you can spare) to intentionally wind down.

For example, the Body Scan relaxation technique works by slowing down your thoughts and bringing your awareness back to your body. This audio track put together by Mindful.Org is a great example for beginners.

4. Deep breathing

When you're strapped for time, this 5-minute deep breathing audio meditation is great for fast and effective stress relief:

5. Game time

For those who enjoy playing games, you can have some fun while de-stressing with these Stress Relief games

6. Yoga

Yoga is now a well-accepted and practiced stress management technique across the globe. If you're yet to give it a go, you can find a studio near you using this global Yoga Finder or learn more about it here.

7. Do it in groups

For some people, group activities are the preference. You can give them a try using these ideas. Our country is the leading country in the world, which is teaching the whole world the benefits of ancient YOGA. It is also one of the best methods of stress management. A regular 10-20 minute session of yoga daily makes us healthy and help us to eradicate many diseases from the body, including stress.

8. Meditation

Internal happiness is achieved when one is positive from the inside and enjoys each and every second of life. But different problems and conditions make us succumb in front of problems, and we start keeping stress in our minds. So the most suggested method is Meditation, which is also mentioned in our holy scriptures. This method makes our brain concentrated and helps us to rekindle new energy in us.

9. Hobbies

Hobbies are the things, which we really like to do in life, pursuing different hobbies, makes us cheerful and we enjoy the time. So one who is stressed must adopt a hobby and spend some time on that, surely he will best result in every manner.

10. Diet and Exercise

A good diet daily and exercise makes our body healthy and protects us from the different types of inborn diseases. So proper diet and 10-20 minute walk daily is a good method to be happy and young.

IV. TYPES OF EXERCISE REQUIRED FOR RELIVING STRESS

There are several ways available to satisfy your weekly exercise target. How do you choose the best physical activity for your exercise? There is no need for you to be an elite athlete or a long-distance runner to achieve stress relief. Almost all kinds of exercises are useful in some way or the other. For instance, you can perform these moderate aerobic exercises such as,

- Jogging or brisk walking.
- Biking. Furthermore, if your health is in any way compromised, you can opt for a pedal-assisted ride, through an e-bike, say experts from Bikeberry
- Water aerobics or swimming.
- Rowing.
- Dancing.
- Playing racquetball or tennis.

V. CONCLUSION

Keep in mind that any kind of exercise will improve your fitness and reduce stress levels. But, it is important to select an activity that you enjoy rather than fear. If you do not enjoy going near water never opt for swimming as a form of exercise. If the thoughts of running result in making you anxious do not opt to train for a 5-kilometer race. You can also combine the activities till you have found the most enjoyable one.

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